

Queer parenting advocate receives \$10,000 award

Toronto (March 9, 2009) -- The Community One Foundation, Toronto's community foundation for the lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer community, is pleased to announce queer parenting activist Rachel Epstein as the latest recipient of the \$10,000 **Steinert & Ferreiro Award**.

Rachel will receive her award at the **Steinert & Ferreiro Award Reception on Thursday, March 26 at the Mandarin Ballroom – Metropolitan Hotel** (108 Chestnut St) at 6pm sponsored by RBC.



Rachel Epstein, founder of Dykes Planning Tykes and the LGBTQ Parenting Network, has been a queer parenting activist, educator and researcher for close to 20 years and has made innumerable and pivotal contributions towards the support, recognition and inclusion of queer parents and their children in Canada. She is currently editing a book, *Who's Your Daddy? and other writings on queer parenting*, to be published by Sumach Press in April, 2009.

"I am honoured and touched to be receiving this award," says Rachel. "In my lifetime I've witnessed the shift from a social and political climate that forced queer people to hide huge parts of themselves in order to keep their children, to one where we can begin to claim our sexual and gender identities and our right to parent. I feel hugely blessed to have been part of making this history."

Launched through a bequest from the Estates of Jonathan R. Steinert and Fernando Gumercindo Ferreiro in 2005, the award is Canada's largest recognition of leadership in the LGBTQ community. Community contribution and leadership are at the heart of the LGBTQ community with leaders often working quietly to achieve growth, understanding and change.

Previous winners include activists George Hislop, Black feminist Beverly Bain, human rights lawyer El-Farouk Khaki and the Reverend Brent Hawkes. Read more at www.communityone.ca.

"Rachel is one of those unsung heroes in our community," says the Foundation's executive director Philip Wong. "Her contribution to the LGBTQ community has helped strengthen and expand the very definition of family and community."

Established in 1980, the Community One Foundation (formerly the Lesbian & Gay Community Appeal) provides grant to community project in order to create a strong, vibrant and diverse community by supporting individuals and groups that enhance the development of the LGBTQ communities in the Greater Toronto Area including Durham, Halton, Peel and York Regions.

The Foundation acknowledges RBC, the Metropolitan Hotel and Plant 3 Communications Ltd for the generous support of this event.

Contact Philip Wong at 416.920.5422 or philip@communityone.ca for more info.



RACHEL EPSTEIN'S BIOGRAPHY

Rachel has provided resources, advocacy and education to queer parents and prospective parents in the Greater Toronto area (GTA) and beyond, as well as working tirelessly to change attitudes and practices in the wider community. Rachel is at the forefront of queer parenting research in Canada and is known as a skilled and compassionate educator.

In 1997, with midwife Kathie Duncan, Rachel founded the Dykes Planning Tykes program, a course for lesbian/bi/queer women who are considering parenthood. In 2001 she was hired to develop the LGBTQ Parenting Network, originally housed at Family Service Toronto and now at the Sherbourne Health Centre.

She and her daughter and co-parent were parties in the 2005 Charter Challenge that resulted in changes to birth registration procedures in Ontario, and recently she has advocated on behalf of LGBTQ communities with the Assisted Human Reproduction Agency in Ottawa. Rachel also works as a professional mediator with LGBTQ parents and prospective parents. She is currently editing a book, *Who's Your Daddy? and other writings on queer parenting*, to be published by Sumach Press in April, 2009.

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